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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Army, DOS and OSD/DPMO
review(s) completed.

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16 May 1967

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Information as of 1600
16 May 1967

HIGHLIGHTS

North Vietnamese forces are continuing to intensify pressure against US Marine positions in northern I Corps.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Communist-initiated activity was centered in the northern provinces of South Vietnam's I Corps on 15-16 May (Paras. 1-7).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Constituent Assembly has reportedly completed its work on the presidential election law without including a provision for a required minimum percentage of the vote (Para. 1). The self-immolation of a Buddhist schoolteacher on 16 May may signal the start of a peace campaign led by militant Buddhists (Paras. 3-5).

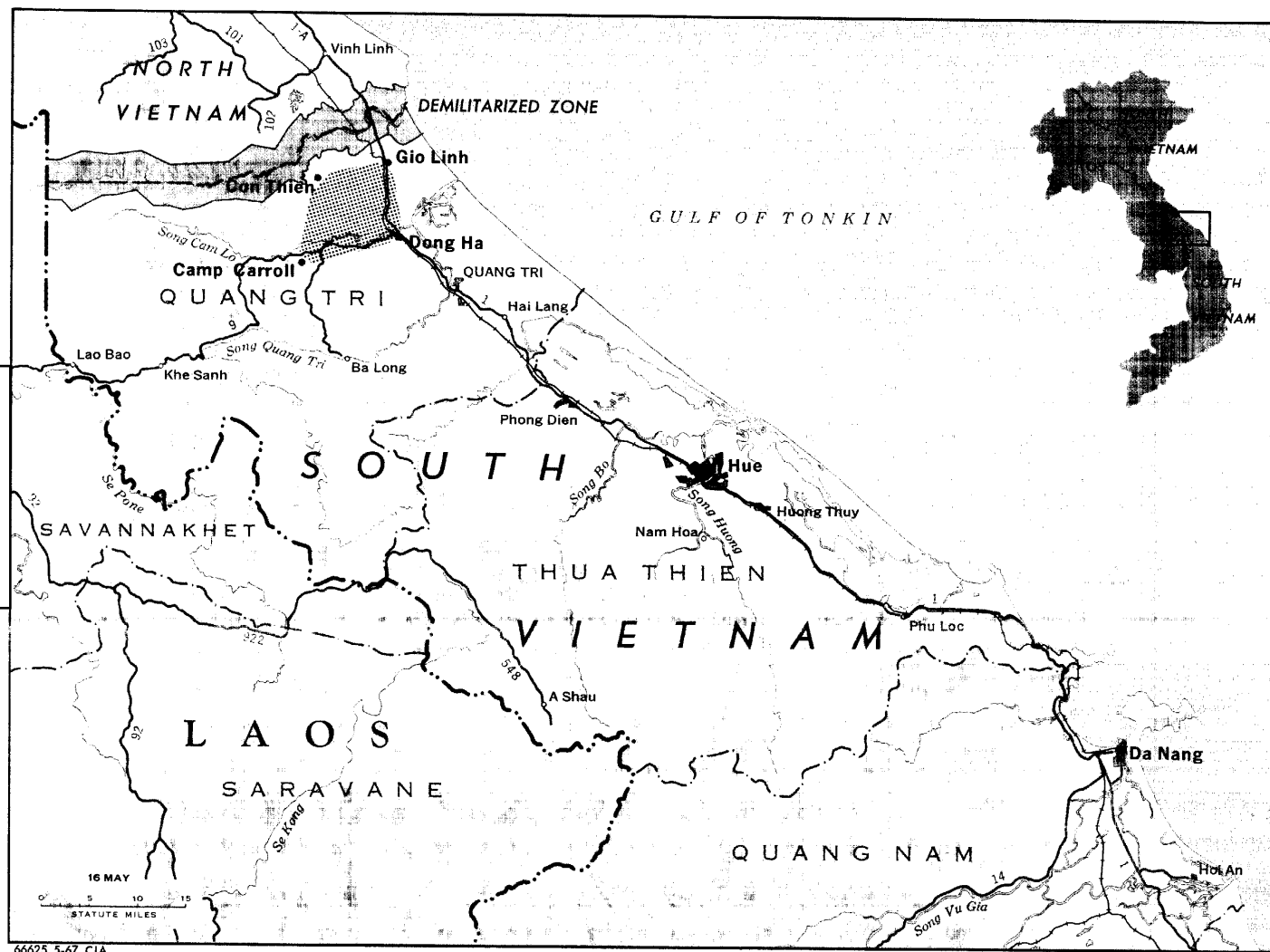
III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: The latest figures on North Vietnamese infiltration are provided (Paras. 1-3).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

A US aircraft has crashed in the Sino-DRV border area

V. Communist Political Developments: Several recent reports on the situation in Hanoi are provided (Para. 1).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. North Vietnamese forces continued to intensify pressure against US Marine positions in South Vietnam's northern I Corps on 15-16 May.

2. The heaviest action was centered in a 100-square-mile area of northeastern Quang Tri Province bounded by the Marine positions at Con Thien, Camp Carroll, Dong Ha, and Gio Linh. American casualties for the last three days total about 225, including 29 killed, in contrast with reported enemy losses of nearly 200 killed.

3. The enemy has been relying on mortar and artillery fire to harass allied positions, although there have been occasional assaults apparently designed to destroy or capture allied artillery pieces used against Communist targets in and north of the DMZ.

4. Sixteen rounds of 82-mm. mortar fire were directed at a US military installation in Hue on 16 May, causing minor damage and injuring nine Americans. Simultaneously, a nearby South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) headquarters was hit by 30 mortar rounds which killed two ARVN soldiers and wounded 27 others.

5. An ARVN battalion, conducting a search for possible Communist units which have been reported to be preparing for an attack on Hue, encountered an estimated enemy company five miles northwest of the city. ARVN forces lost eight killed and 56 wounded; 78 Communist soldiers were reported killed.

6. Farther south in Quang Nam Province, a US Marine artillery position seven miles west of Da Nang was hit by approximately ten rounds of rocket fire. One American was reported wounded and no damage was done to the equipment. A US Marine reaction force subsequently located 31 rocket launchers and 16 140-mm. rockets about five miles from the American field position. The enemy had apparently abandoned the rockets and launchers because of accurate Marine counterfire.

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7. These large, barrage-type rockets have been used against allied positions and installations previously in the northern I Corps. Because of their portability and long range, they continue to be a threat.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Constituent Assembly voted final approval of the presidential election law on 16 May, according to press sources. During its final review of the law, the assembly reportedly defeated an attempt to include a provision which would have stipulated that the winner must achieve a minimum percentage of the vote or win a runoff election. As the law now stands, the candidate who gets the most votes will be elected, regardless of how small a percentage he receives. Supporters of Premier Ky backed this provision and its acceptance by the assembly is considered a notable victory--and an advantage--for Ky.

2. The assembly will probably turn to drafting the electoral laws for the upper and lower houses of the legislature as its next major item of business. The assembly has also been charged by the constitution with formulating laws organizing the supreme court and the inspectorate of the future government, and for regulating political party and press activity.

Militant Buddhists May Be Attempting to Launch Peace Campaign

3. A 33-year-old Buddhist schoolteacher burned herself to death in front of a pagoda in the Saigon area early on the morning of 16 May. Because it occurred on the first day of a week-long celebration leading to Buddha's birthday on 23 May, the immolation may have been politically motivated. Press reports state that Vietnamese police seized copies of a letter--apparently left behind by the suicide victim--which called for an end to the war.

4. According to the press, "official" Buddhist spokesmen expressed surprise at the immolation, and said they knew no reason for it. Other Buddhists at the pagoda, however, reportedly said that there would be additional incidents of this kind before Buddha's birthday, heralding a "struggle for peace."

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5. There have been numerous indications that the militant Buddhists under Thich Tri Quang intend to seize upon the peace issue as a means of regaining political momentum. US Embassy officials believe that the militants may well attempt to launch peace demonstrations, but that they will either be unable to get such demonstrations going or that they will be small and pose no serious threat to public order. Such demonstrations would be most likely to occur in Hue, Da Nang, and Dalat as well as in Saigon, and government authorities in all these cities appear to be prepared for any developments.

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INFILTRATION TOTALS SINCE 1 OCT. 1965

Based on MACV holdings as of 28 February 1967

		ACCEPTED				MONTHLY TOTALS
		CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	TOTAL	POSSIBLE	
1965	October	6,500	-	6,500	200	6,700
	November	4,000	-	4,000	600	4,600
	December	-	600	600	200	800
1966	January	3,800	1,700	5,500	2,500	8,000
	February	6,700	2,400	9,100	2,000	11,100
	March	11,500	1,500	13,000	3,700	16,700
	April	100	500	600	-	600
	May	900	900	1,800	3,500	5,300
	June	10,500	600	11,100	1,300	12,400
	July	5,200	100	5,300	5,500	10,800
	August	1,600	400	2,000	3,000	5,000
	September	1,400	100	1,500	600	2,100
	October	100	600	700	4,600	5,300
	November	500	-	500	600	1,100
	December	-	200	200	1,100	1,300
1967	January	-	600	600	1,100	1,700
	February	-	-	-	300	300
	March	-	-	-	900	900
	April	-	-	-	100	100
	TOTALS	52,800	10,200	63,000	31,800	94,800

MONTHLY AVERAGE (1 OCT. 1965- 30 APRIL 1967)

ACCEPTED: CONFIRMED AND PROBABLE 3,300

TOTAL ACCEPTED AND POSSIBLE 5,000

ACCEPTED INFILTRATION: Those NVA personnel, groups, and units which have entered South Vietnam and are carried in the confirmed or probable categories.

CONFIRMED: A confirmed infiltration unit/group is one which is accepted in South Vietnam on the basis of information provided by a minimum of two POWs or returnees (Hoi Chanh) from the unit/group, or two captured documents from the unit, or a combination of personnel and documents.

PROBABLE: A probable infiltration unit/group is one which is accepted in South Vietnam on the basis of information provided by one POW or returnee (Hoi Chanh) from the unit/group, or a captured document, supported by information from other sources which can be evaluated as probably true.

POSSIBLE INFILTRATION: A possible infiltration unit/group is one which may be in South Vietnam on the basis of information which can be evaluated as possibly true even though no POW, returnee (Hoi Chanh), or document is available to verify the reports.

MONTH OF INFILTRATION: The month established as the date an infiltration unit/group crosses the international border into South Vietnam for the first time.

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

Latest Figures on North Vietnamese Infiltration

1. The most recent MACV listing of infiltration shows that some 3,000 North Vietnamese troops moved into South Vietnam between 1 January and 30 April 1967. Evidence obtained since 30 April reveals that three additional North Vietnamese regiments--not included in MACV's April total--entered South Vietnam this year. These regiments, with a total strength of 5,100 men, are all subordinate to the 325th NVA Division and were accepted into MACV's order of battle in early May.

2. The enemy's infiltration methods make it difficult to detect many groups until they have been in South Vietnam for as long as six months and in some instances, even longer. Therefore, the figures currently developed for the period from 1 November 1966 through the end of April 1967 are considered to be incomplete.

3. If average infiltration were computed for the period 1 October 1965 through 30 October 1966 (the period for which infiltration data is considered to be relatively complete) the figures would be approximately 4,800 per month for the accepted category, and approximately 6,900 men per month for the accepted and possible categories taken together.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

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US Aircraft Downed in Sino/DRV Border Area

3. One USAF F-105 aircraft may have been lost in the Sino-North Vietnamese border area on the evening of 15 May. The aircraft was damaged by ground fire during a raid in the vicinity of Kep Airfield in northeast North Vietnam. In his last radio contact the pilot stated "I'm hit and heading out."

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1.

[redacted] life in the DRV capital
has become somewhat more difficult [redacted]
[redacted] but that the situation is far from desperate.
[redacted] low-level officials and
persons without any official rank received flour as
one quarter of the May rice ration. Kerosene per
household has been limited since March to one liter
for a period of four months. Since early February
meat has been only occasionally available to low-level
officials. A shortage of gasoline for nonmilitary
purposes occurred in mid-May, [redacted]
Similar shortages have been reported from time to
time over the past year. [redacted]

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vised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that shortages
will continue and that they must become accustomed
to eating smoked meat and fish, learn to use flour,
and attempt to live off their missions as much as
possible.

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